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THE BOY AND THE PARROT.

At a pretty village in France lived a little boy named Eugene. This village stood at the foot of some great mountains called the Pyrenees. These mountains are so high that their tops are always covered with snow, and on their sides grow large forests of pine and fir. You know the pine and the fir, they are those dark trees with narrow pointed leaves, that are green all the year round; they make our gardens look very pleasant in the winter when the flowers are dead and the fruit trees have all lost their leaves; but I fancy you would not admire them so much growing in the great dark woods on the mountains I am telling you about. Little Eugene, however, was accustomed to the dark woods and the high mountains, both of which would frighten you; and he used sometimes to go with his father's servants, and gather wild fruits and flowers about the lower steeps; for there were many little nooks among the great hills which were covered with soft grass, among which grew the yellow cowslip and wild strawberries. Now you must not suppose that the village was gloomy, because it was near to these great mountains; no, it was a very pretty place indeed, with a little river running past it, with all sorts of fruit trees growing on its banks; plums, and pears, and apples, and flowering trees too, white and purple lilac, laburnum, and that tree which you see in the summer with long stalks of pretty pink flowers, and which is called acacia. But, besides these fine flowers and nice fruits, there were near to the village where Eugene lived a great many vineyards. A vineyard is the place where grapes grow to make wine: these vineyards look very beautiful, when the fruit is ripe all hanging in great bunches ready to be cut by the grape gatherers: our country is too cold to grow grapes for making wine. Well, below the village on the banks of the river were the fruit trees and the vineyards, and above it were the dark mountains. Eugene's father was very rich, and he lived in the largest house in the village; and he spent a great deal of time in teaching his little boy, hoping to make him a good and clever man. Now, generally speaking, Eugene was tolerably good, and he was always clever; he was never idle over his lessons; and he was kind and affectionate to his relations and friends. Two faults, however, this little boy possessed, and these two faults quite spoiled all his good qualities. He had a little sister four years younger than himself, for Eugene was thirteen years old, and Lucille was only nine. Now Eugene was very fond of the little girl, but he had a sad habit of teazing her: a stranger to have noticed them sometimes, would have supposed, that so far from loving, he had a great dislike to her, and was never so happy as when he could make her cry. Besides this, Eugene could never keep his hands off things that did not belong to him, and as he had been frequently punished for meddling with the property of his father and the servants, his poor sister was the chief victim of his mischievous tricks The principal pet and plaything of Lucille was a parrot, which a friend of her father had brought her from the West-Indies. This parrot was very tame and clever; it would call Lucille by her name, it would sit on her shoulder or knee, and feed from her hand; and with this parrot, as it did not belong to him, Eugene had always a particular desire to interfere. Many a time had he been reprimanded by his father for taking the bird out of its cage, and many a time had he been smitten with a violent longing to carry it off with him to the woods or fields, where he might play with it unobserved.

His father and mother being called away from home for some days, before they departed gave Eugene a strict command not to teaze his sister, and, above all, not to meddle with the parrot. This injunction Eugene managed to obey pretty well for three days; but on the fourth, the servants being busy, his sister at her lessons, and he alone with the parrot, he could not help thinking what nice sport it would be to tie a string round the bird's foot, and carry it off with him to the woods. Eugene knew this would be very wrong, as he should be disobeying his parents; so he made a desperate effort to leave the room and leave the bird behind him: he did manage to cross the threshold, but a shrill scream from Poll quite overset his resolution. He felt in his pocket for a piece of string, but not finding it, he caught up the cage, which was very light, and set off with as much speed as he could, considering the encumbrance. About a mile from the village was a wood, through this wood there was a solitary road, winding up towards the mountains, and leading, after the termination of about three miles, to another village situate on the descent of a mountain. The way to this village was dreary and unfrequented, the wood at times breaking off into a little hollow, without any trees, and nothing but the bare brown earth and rocks. The grown-up people in the village where Eugene lived, knew very well that bands of gypsies from the mountains often passed through this wood, and that it was also liable to an occasional visit from a stray wolf.

for those terrible animals are still common among the mountains of France; sometimes in the dead of the winter they come down in great troops, and carry off all who may be so unfortunate as to fall in their way. To this dangerous wood, however, Eugene betook himself, for he did not think about either wolves or gipsies, he only thought of going where he was not likely to meet any of his companions, who might go to his father and tell what he had been doing; and all that he remembered about the wood was, that it was seldom passed through by any one from his own village. To so much danger do children expose themselves when they do wrong; nor do not believe that those who are older can pursue an evil course without suffering from it; people of all ages are severely punished, when they do what is not right, and are as really ignorant of what will tend to their own good as little Eugene, when he went to the lonely wood with the parrot: for, however much pleasure or profit may be promised to us by sin, most certainly will it involve not only others but ourselves in misfortunes.

Behold, Eugene now arrived in the wood, intent not upon its dangers, but having escaped in security with his sister's parrot. With great glee he sported along the tangled paths, the cage in his hand, and Poll screaming and clapping her wings with delight, thinking herself, most likely, in her native woods. Tired with walking and running by turns, and being now, he very well knew, beyond pursuit, Eugene having arrived at a little open place in the wood, sat himself down to play with the bird. It was a very pretty spot where he stopped; the grass during all the hot summer weather was kept quite green by the moisture that gathered under the branches of the trees, which grew thickly round: there were thick knots of daisies, fox-glove, and blue-bell, a quantity of creeping plants hung their long tendrils over the furze, and round the roots of the trees, and in the brake there was a tempting store of wild fruits. Across this little glade murmured a small stream, which had its source in the mountains, and which passing through the wood fell into the river near the village. where Eugene lived. On the bank of the rivulet sat Eugene, the cage was opened, and the parrot taken out; and heartily Eugene laughed at her tricks and her chatterings. He had plucked some berries in one of the thickets to feed the bird; and some time mistress Poll was perfectly content to eat the berries and sit and chatter on his knee, held by one of his shoe-strings which he had fastened to her foot. Unfortunately, however, for poor Eugene, she got tired of these amusements sooner than he did: the piece of ribbon which he had taken from his shoe, was neither long enough, nor strong enough, for the purpose to which he had devoted it; and Poll, no doubt thinking herself quite at home in the woods, and, therefore, at liberty to do as she pleased, gave a sudden spring, which jerked the end of the string out of Eugene's hand, and then flew away over the stream, settling on the branches of a tree that grew on its opposite bank. The boy's fright, when he found that the much-valued bird had escaped, would have been alone a sufficient punishment for his disobedience, but a severer one was in store. Jumping up in terror and confusion, his foot slipped, and he went headlong into the stream. Fortunately for him it was not more than a foot deep, and he soon scrambled out, but at the expense of being wetted to the skin, and with the loss of the shoe from which he had taken the string, and which being loose came off his foot and got entangled in some weeds. Drenched as he was, the only care of poor Eugene was, to secure the parrot, and approaching the tree he endeavoured to coax her to come down. Poll, however, was no less fond of her will than he was of his, and only replied to his entreaties by crying "Lucille! Lucille!" and then by deliberately flying to a taller tree, and taking her station on one of its topmost branches. Eugene endeavoured to climb the tree; Poll departed to the next. He went to fetch the cage, for he knew, could he now catch her, she would again escape him unless safely imprisoned; but the cage was still on the other side of the stream, and Eugene was obliged to encounter a new wetting to obtain it. When he returned to the foot of the tree, on whose branches he had left Poll, she was no longer there, and her cry of "Lucille! Lucille!" drew him into the recesses of the wood, and toward the foot of the mountains. To add to his distress, the sun was now beginning to go down, and through an opening in the woods he could see the distant Pyrenees; the snow on their summits changed to a bright crimson in the declining sunbeams, their long sloping yellow rays had already faded away from the woods. Eugene was cold, and wet, and hungry; besides this, through walking without a shoe, he had run a thorn into his foot: he sat down on the root of a tree and wept. "Lucille!" cried the parrot from the branches of the same tree. Eugene thought he would make one more attempt to regain the bird; in spite of his sore foot he climbed the tree, and to his inexpressible joy, Poll sat quietly on the branch, and permitted herself to be made a prisoner. But Eugene's troubles had only commenced: he had secured Poll in her cage, which he had slung on his arm, with his hankerchief, while he climbed the tree, and was about to descend, when he heard a rustling among the thickets, succeeded by a low growl; and looking down, he saw a large wolf come out of the copse and crouch at the foot of the tree, lifting up his head and sniffing the air as if he scented his victim above; while his great eyes, as Eugene looked down through the fast increasing darkness, seemed to gleam like fiery coals. Who shall describe the poor boy's terror? how hastily he climbed to the highest branches of the tree! how he cried, and wished that he had never been disobedient! how he prayed, and resolved if it pleased Heaven to save him from this danger, that he would in future attend to all the commands of his parents! His poor parents! how the tears streamed down his face when he thought of them, for they were expected home that evening, and he knew how terrified they would be at his absence! Thus, more than an hour passed away, broken by no other sound except the sobs of Eugene, the rustling of the leaves in the wind, the cry of the parrot, and an occasional growl from the wolf at the foot of the

tree. Poor Eugene's wet clothes were drying on him; he shook from head to foot with cold; his hands were so cold that he could not hold the cage, and he was obliged to fasten it on his arm with his handkerchief; besides this, he was very hungry, and his foot was in terrible pain from the thorn which he could not take out. It had long been quite dark, and his short angry growls alone told Eugene that his enemy was still stationed at the foot of the tree; when, to his great joy, he perceived a light, evidently that of a torch advancing through the wood. Presently two men appeared, each of them with a musquet on his shoulder, and one of them carrying a torch. They heard the growl of the wolf, who had turned from the tree, and sprung forwards on their approach; but before he reached them, he fell with a ball in his head, from the musquet of the man without the torch. Eugene sobbed for joy, as he saw the dreadful animal rolling on the ground in the agonies of death, and the parrot, startled by the report of the piece, screamed out, "Lucille! Lucille!" The noise attracted the attention of the men, and coming up to the tree they waved the torch high, and perceiving Eugene roughly bade him come down. This command the poor boy lost no time in obeying, but when he reached the ground he perceived but too plainly that his condition was but little changed for the better. When he ran away with the parrot he forgot what he had often heard, that the wood was infested by gipsies, into whose hands he was now sure he had fallen. The appearance of the two men was enough to frighten him; they were tall, ill-looking fellows, with thick black hair hanging about their faces; their dress was torn and dirty; they had each round his waist a belt, in which hung a pair of pistols and a long knife, the sight of which made poor Eugene tremble; and one of them carried a small bundle. Eugene fell on his knees, and begged they would pity him, and show him the way out of the wood. But instead of any pity one of the fellows roughly kicked him, and bidding him get up they stripped him of his clothes, and gave him an old sack which they took out of their bundle to put round his shoulders. Thus equipped, they dragged the poor boy out of the wood and up a narrow pass in the mountains, compelling him to carry the cage with the parrot, whose shrill cries seemed to afford them much amusement; the wood was left far behind, and their way lay between dark rocks upon whose sides scarce a shrub was to be seen. Poor Eugene's feet bled at every step he took, his more than half-naked frame shook with cold, while he vainly wept, and thought of his home, his parents, and his little sister. At length they came to a pass in the mountains where two roads parted; to the right, and at a great distance, Eugene perceived a glimmering of lights, as if in the cottage casements of a village; to the left, and much nearer, he saw a broad red blaze dancing on the rocks, and a number of dark figures moving amidst the light, this was the gipsy encampment. All Eugene's other terrors had now given way to fear of the people who had made him a prisoner; and no sooner did they reach the avenue on the right, than in spite of his wounded feet, his cold and fatigue, he slipped aside and ran down the narrow road with a swiftness that defied the pursuit of the gipsies. Amid all his terror, he still kept hold of the cage, and the cries of the bird mixed in his imagination with a terrible noise of pursuit. He no longer shook with cold; heated and out of breath he approached the village, whose lights he had seen at a distance; they were very near, but poor Eugene had not strength to reach them, his foot slipped, and he fell insensible with pain, terror, and fatigue. When Eugene came to himself, he was stretched on a mattress. He heard the old cry of "Lucille," and opening his eyes, he saw that he was in a small cell, and beside him stood the well-known form of Father Bernard, a venerable monk, who, frequently, when abroad on his missions of charity, called at the house of Eugene's parents, and whose oft-repeated lessons of obedience it would have been well if Eugene had practised better. From the good monk he learned that two of the lay brothers, returning to the monastery from the neighbouring town, had been attracted by the cries of the parrot, and found him lying almost dead by the way side. They immediately carried him to the monastery, and placing him on a warm bed, had with a great deal of trouble brought him to himself. Many were the tears Eugene shed as he recounted to the monk the suffering he had endured, which he knew to have been brought on by his own disobedience. And early in the morning a lay brother was dispatched to his parents, who had spent the night in seeking him, whose absence was, however, accounted for by that of the parrot. When they arrived at the monastery Eugene did not know them; the fright, and the cold, and pain he had undergone, had thrown him into a fever, and many days elapsed before he knew that his fond parents were watching over him. When again he enjoyed that pleasure, it was with many tears he promised that in future he would never disobey their commands, and whenever he again felt inclined to touch what was not his own, to teaze his sister, or to be in the slightest degree disobedient, the voice of the parrot, crying, "Lucille! Lucille!" at once brought to his mind all the dangers and terrors he had endured, and made him submit his will to that of those who were older and wiser than himself.

THE answer of a pious lady, who was asked her opinion of frequenting the theatre:

"For my own part, though my taste might be pleased, I should be afraid to frequent the theatre, because of the evil influence attending such places. I apprehend that if in such an assembly, our eyes, like those of the servant of Elisha, were opened, we should see a host of evil spirits differently engaged, according to the variety of dispositions and propensities they had to encounter; and we might reasonably expect, that if any of the worshippers of God had dared to venture into a place so consecrated to Satan, that he would appoint some of his first engines to attack them."

MANNERS are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and colour to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them.—*Burke.*

LETTERS FROM BELGIUM.

LETTER VIII.

(Continued from page 126.)

SATURDAY come, and the serious business of confession gone through, the pleasant recreation of decorating the Church ready for the morrow begins, and the ornamenting the candles which they are to carry. They are allowed to go round the village to collect flowers and evergreens, every one gladly contributing their primroses and other early flowers. The Church is strewed with these, mixed with sprigs of evergreen, also the pathway they are to tread from the Presbytory to the Church.

The morning arrives, at length the joyous, joyous, morning of "First Communion"—that day of days, which can happen to each but once in their lives. Very difficult is it for mothers to keep the happy children in their beds, as they wish to do, till the last possible moment, as they must communicate fasting, and they have much previously to go through. Every child is dressed in entirely new clothing; those who are poor are supplied by the Pastor or other friends. Our rich farmers dress their children very handsomely for their state, with rich lace caps, silk aprons, &c.—all neat and comfortable according to their station. In towns much luxury and taste are used, nothing being considered too good to adorn the child whom Christ is to visit.

They are assembled at the Pastor's, and conducted processionally into the Church, the Pastor and Church Officers chanting the psalm, "Praise the Lord, ye children," the Mass boys flinging incense. As they enter the Church, the Veni Creator

> "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come,
> From Thy bright heavenly throne;
> Come, take possession of our souls,
> And make them all Thy own."

is begun, they are conducted to their seats, or rather to the chairs in which they are to kneel. These chairs are placed immediately before the High Altar, a set on the right hand of the nave for the boys, and a set on the left for the girls, three and three down the Church. The Priest proceeds on to the Altar, and kneeling before it finishes the Veni Creator. The children kneel the whole time of the Mass, in their chairs or on the ground, according to the more or less solemn parts. After the Gospel the Priest enters the pulpit, and addresses the children for about twenty minutes, when they sit on forms near him. I may not touch on what he says, it would be too long. He then proceeds with the Mass. One of our ceremonies —that of kissing the patten, which perhaps I have not described to you, is very touching on days of first communion. The consecrated plate, on which the Sacred Host is about to repose, is brought by the Priest just before the washing of hands to the rail of the Altar; he holds the under part of this gold plate to the lips of each person who approaches, and they reverently kiss it. The persons for whom the Mass is offered, are those whose right it is to do this, thus on days of first communion this right is the children's. They, therefore, go up in most beautiful order, having been trained during the week, and it is one of the prettiest ceremonies of the day. The parents, teachers, and friends of the children go next, and it is affecting to see the quivering lips and trembling hands of the fathers, our sturdy farmers, moved as they are, even to tears, on this deeply interesting occasion.

The Priest having himself communicated, comes to the rail of the Sanctuary, and again addresses the children. He began to-day with saying: "I come to you now, my dear children, the herald from your King; He sends me to you to announce to you, that He is this moment about to come unto you! And I am to ask you, if you can say, 'My heart is ready, Lord Jesus, my heart is ready.' Yes, your hearts are ready, my children; I know you, I know your hearts are ready, and be not afraid to arise and receive your Sacred Visitor. For it is Jesus who is coming to you; your own beloved Jesus, whom you cannot help but love. He comes as the Spouse of your soul. He comes as your Father. He comes as your Brother, as your Friend, your tender gentle Friend, your rich and powerful Friend, and he comes to give you all his riches, for he comes to give you Himself. The same Jesus, with whom you are to live in all Eternity, comes to give you a pledge that he longs for your society with Him in Heaven, and that he will take you there to dwell with Him. He comes *to you* to-day, as a pledge that you are to go *to Him* for ever."

While the Priest turns away to fetch the Most Holy Sacrament, the children recite their acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, a sweet-toned female voice is heard indistinctly at first, but more clearly as the congregation becomes more stilled to listen; it is the first girl who recites these acts aloud in the name of the rest who whisper them. Then the first boy recites the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, &c.

The Priest turning round, elevates the Sacred Host as I have before described his doing at Holy Communion, and the children striking their breast, repeat aloud with him three times—"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," &c.

Three little boys then approach the right end of the Altar-rail, and three little girls the left, kneeling all at one moment on the stones for a few seconds, and again rising kneel on the step of the Sanctuary to communicate. Having communicated, these turn slowly away with upraised hands and lowly bending heads, and returning kneel down in their places. Six others communicate in the same order, and so on to the end. The Mass ended, the Priest again comes to the Altar-rail, and again addresses the children and

the parents; reminding them that they have God's beloved ones committed to their care, cleansed by the Sacrament of Penance, and members of Christ's body, tabernacles which He this day visits in Person, and which it belongs in part to their care and vigilance to preserve as his living temples unto life everlasting, &c. saying much that is very beautiful, but which would be all too long to write down here. These pious parents are very sensible of their Pastor's charge, and tears flow down the cheeks of many as they receive it.

The Priest having taken off his sacrificial dress, comes amongst the children and recites aloud some beautiful prayers and acts of thanksgiving, and then dismisses them. Glad enough are we, to see the poor little creatures bear up so well as they generally do against the long fasting and fatigue, and joyfully do we hail them amongst us, and congratulate them on being communicants with ourselves.

I ignorantly requested once, that they might come to our house to breakfast after first communion, longing to have the little holy beings to feed at our table, who had just been fed with "angels' food." But a stronger claim than mine lay upon them—"Ah no," was the reply, "you must not ask First Communicants to breakfast with you on that day. The parents would not part with their children at that moment." I found indeed that the domestic hearth was a sacred place on that morning. Friends are invited, and by those parents who can afford it a handsome breakfast is provided: buttered cake and coffee, a rousing fire, and a hearty welcome awaiting all comers.

But I shall tire you with my description. I have purposely been minute, in order to bring your mind to dwell on the truth, that our children are well worthy to become guests thus early at the Sacred Banquet, and hope to have removed from you the error, that disrespect is shown to Christ's Sacrament by admitting children to it. I will only shortly detain you with the farther history of this day.

The children are expected to attend the second Mass, which they do. Also the Vespers, which are solemnly chanted for them. After which, they are led processionally to the baptismal font, while the psalm is chanted: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters." The font and baptistry are profusely decorated. The Priest addresses them standing in the baptistry with the children around him; he reminds them of the vows made in their name, and of the care the Church has bestowed on them by the command of God. Each child places its right hand on the font and kisses it, and they are conducted back to their places.

The services over, the Pastor generally takes them under his care to amuse them for the evening, lest by any imprudence they should be led into inconvenient gaity, on this, to them, sacred day.

The next day or two he usually devotes to them, to give them some innocent recreation. Some Pastors go out with them accompanied by the Curate, to spend the day at a distant farm, where they must go in a boat, or amuses them in any way of innocent novelty. The Church, as I have told you, approving of recreation after severe attention to her solemn requirements.

This year the pleasure of entertaining the First Communicants fell to the share of my family. We had lain under the promise of inviting the whole school to drink coffee with us from St. Gregory's day, the 12th of March. St. Gregory's day is a festival for all schools; the children have a Mass and a holiday in the school-room, and a very merry day it generally is. The Pastor sometimes giving them a dinner and being present, and playing with them, and making them as happy as it is possible for children to be. But this year for certain good reasons of his own, in regard to the school-master, our Pastor found it expedient not to go amongst them, to mix in their recreations, only giving them a Mass and distributing the prizes, and St. Gregory's day passed over very heavily in consequence. They chose their King and Queen, but the Pastor was not at home to give them the coronation dresses, and the royal pair remained uncrowned and and unhonoured.

In the afternoon of the second day's holiday, they were met coming in a body up the drive to our house. "Where are you all going to?" they were asked. "Oh, to tell Madame how dull we are."—"But Madame is ill, and you must not go there making a noise." "Is she ill? then we will go back again and ask the master to have class, for we can bear it no longer."

All this awakened very naturally our compassion, and we applied for permission to invite them little and big, to spend an afternoon with us. "Not just at present," was the Pastor's reply—"I know you have much on your hands just now, and I am very busy too; let us wait till First Communion Monday, and then invite them all together, it will be a saving of time to us."

First Communion Monday was, therefore, fixed for the holiday. But First Communicants were not to be treated like ordinary folk, and the fête must be prepared for and celebrated with befitting ceremony. A large unfinished drawing-room, consisting only of the bare walls, roof, and windows, and the dry earth for a floor, was the exact place in which to receive so wild a troop. But what would a fête be in Belgian eyes without an ornamented room? And how to ornament bare brick walls? Our English perceptions of the beautiful were far from reaching this point. So we requested the school-master to send us a deputation out of the school to hold committee on the subject, and our counsellors hit upon the exact plan. (What Belgian child is at a loss, when it is a question of decoration for a fête)? "We will stick small twigs of evergreen intermixed with flowers between the bricks," was the ready proposition. "Beautiful," I replied; "come some half dozen of you for a day or two, then, to work at it in play-time, and we shall have a fairy bower to receive you in."

The work proceeded to admiration, the best of the

flowers were selected to adorn above the chimney-piece, at the far end of the room opposite the door, looking very pretty. Two large flags were borrowed and placed slanting on each side of the fire-place, under these a carpet was spread, and a large high-backed chair covered with tapestry placed upon this for the Pastor's seat, before which a large table covered with a damask table-cloth (a great luxury in peasant eyes) for a few select guests. Down the room on each side, tables and tables and tables, on each side of which the children's church forms, the *Catechism* forms, and near the entrance opposite the Pastor's seat a tiny low table surrounded by very low forms for the baby class, the prettiest party of all. The room was strewed with flowers and evergreens, and the coffee basins placed, immense pewter dishes of cakes set on side tables ready for handing round, and all was ready for the joyous party. The farmer's wife, of whom you have already heard me speak, was engaged to make the coffee, boiling the water in her copper, as she was warned she must prepare coffee by pails-full. The children were to arrive at coffee-time, that is, about half-past one—and punctually at this time merry voices were heard approaching; they came in beautiful order, accompanied by their Pastor and school-master. The First Communicants were conducted to tables at the upper end of the room, and took their seats each in his own place, as first, second, and third, as each has a place in teaching for First Communion, according to his merit.

Our party would not have disgraced an English drawing-room. Nothing could proceed more prettily than the coffee-drinking, five pails-full being exhausted, with a proportionate number of buns, in the quietest style possible. But the Pastor was there, and where a Priest is and children, there must be some mirth. He began to think the children were too still to be happy; thus at the last round of the coffee he stood up and cried, "Viva for the King," for our King was amongst us, now crowned with flowers and clothed in golden starred belts and crimson sash, and bearing a gilded sceptre. This subsiding—a "Viva for the Queen," also amongst us. And then a "Viva for the King's mother," the good Coleta, who had made the coffee, and was here assisting to pour it out. She stopped her hand, while filling a basin, in astonishment at her own honours. By this time the young revellers were put up to the very pitch of fun, and up jumped the Pastor, crying "Follow, follow me," and out he led them into the farmer's orchard, the only place we could think of, to appoint for them to play in, where they might be as wildly free as they would, without doing any harm; here they played, and played in good earnest, all sorts of games, such as English children would have loved to look upon and join in, so innocent, and yet so merry, it did one's heart good to be amongst them.

Meantime the tables were cleared and indeed cleaned, for the poor last cups of coffee had been pretty well spilt on them during the Pastor's mischievous vivas. But common deal tables and an earthen floor he knew could not be injured.

A second repast was then laid out, a very indispensable one to a Belgian child, a sort of lunch between noon dinner and an eight-o'clock supper, consisting generally of a slice of bread-and-butter, and a mug of cold water. But on this festival day, buttered cakes and hot boiled milk and water were served, almost the greatest treat next to coffee that their simple tastes could be regaled with.

They came in in quiet order, two and two, as if all their play had been spirited out of them by some magical touch. It is, in truth, one of the great ends which their benevolent friends, the Priests, seek and secure, by their condescension—*Obedience*—cheerful affectionate obedience.

The second repast ended, they were again taken out into the orchard, accompanied by prizes of handkerchiefs and books, English books with pictures, which were to be played for, by picking up eggs and tossing them adroitly into a basket of chaff while running, and other innocent and exciting games, which I think we grown-up babies had as much pleasure in mixing with as the children. It grew now time to separate, being near eight o'clock, and having received a charge from the Pastor, to be faithfully at the Mass and in the school next morning, they went in a body to the door of the house, to thank my Mother for their treat, and returned separately each to his own home.

You have now in detail the account of the teaching of children ordained by our Church, which I feel must convince you, that the anecdote of the little Italian peasant which pleased you so much, was only one among thousands which might be produced in proof of the thorough instruction which the Church every where provides, where she has the power to do so. And I am sure you see that the pretty epithet bestowed by our protestant countryman, "his little Pastum theologian," was not misapplied. For if you believe my account to be faithful, you must admit, that every one of my little fellow villagers has had the means placed within his reach of answering any interrogation that might be put to him regarding his religion, and, when possessing sufficient natural capacity, might be called "a little theologian." And you must remember, our village is only one among the rest of Catholic Belgium, all of which are under the same clerical teaching, not left to the taste or inclination of each parish Priest, but compulsory on them.

Of the general education bestowed upon the Belgian poor I hope one day to give you some account. It being mixed up of clerical and government superintendance, forms quite another matter from the intention of this letter, which is to show you what the *Church* provides of religious education, and which *must* be acted up to by her Clergy under the most adverse circumstances in regard to governments and local difficulties, as far as is possibly in their power.

It is now July, and time for me to send off my letter. Hearing the Catechism bell of our sister village ring, it came into my head I should like to be present, in order to tell you something about another Catechism, lest you should think I have been too partial about my own village. It was no time to ask permission, so I *stole* in. I found the venerable Pastor surrounded by, I should think, about a hundred and fifty children; hearing the lessons and questioning and instructing upon them without any book, walking up and down amongst his children with his hands crossed behind him, as one perfectly master of his art, which he was exercising with the ease of a school-master. While I listened, I could not help remembering his untiring punctuality. Unfailing as the clock strikes the half-hour past ten on a Thursday morning, there rings his Catechism bell. I have never missed it but once when within its sound, for the years we have been his neighbours, and then he was seriously ill. Five-and-twenty years he has rung that same bell, and taught those same truths, in that same Church. The fathers and mothers of many present to-day, must have learned their religion from his lips, and are now practising his holy lessons in their quiet round of household duties, and adorning his Church by their unaffected piety; standing as witnesses of the vigilance of the true Church in providing among her Clergy the teachers of her infants.

The First Communicants taught entirely by himself, prove the exquisite pains which he bestows on them. Their whole deportment on First Communion day is truly beautiful, quite a model for younger Priests. I said once to him: "The school-master, I suppose, assists you in training your young Communicants?"—"No, no," he replied quickly, "no one does any thing for my First Communicants but myself; no, no, I train them myself." I will only add one little incident of this week. We are employing a child to watch our garden, being almost eaten up by sparrows, whom despite my labours to convince you of the universality of education in our Catholic land, I must own to be a race wholly uneducated, and thievish, and voracious, and cunning, and bold. Our little living Maukin was a First Communicant this year. We engaged her for a month, to come from early dawn to seven in the evening, she could not, therefore, go to school, only to Mass in the morning. When we spoke with her mother to engage her, I heard some under words murmured about Catechism. "Ah! I understand," I replied; "she must not omit learning her Catechism."—"Why, if you please, she could take her book with her and learn a little every day."—"Certainly, and I engage to hear her lessons." It was agreed, and little Rose's lesson this morning was so very much in point with the subject of my letter, and so very pretty, that I think you will forgive me if I copy some parts of it out for you. It is the last of a set of ten lessons on Communion, forming a little book, which I find is learnt in addition to the other Catechisms.

"What are the fruits of a worthy Communion? 1. The forgiveness of daily sin, for which one has true contrition. 2. The increase of sanctifying grace. 3. Union with Christ. 4. The preserving the spiritual life of the soul. 5. Strength against temptation. 6. And earnest of future glory.

Do all persons receive the same fruits from this Sacrament?—No: but each according to his devotion and state of heart.

What must I do in order to receive this Holy Sacrament with great fruit?

You must receive it with a living faith, with firm trust, with burning love, and deep humility.

How should I prepare myself the evening before Communion?—By earnest prayer.

What should I do if wakeful during the night?—Think of Whom I am going to receive."

Then follow instructions on the manner of entering the Church, and on the exterior behaviour—Such as

How must I approach the Communion rail?—Quietly and slowly, with your hands together, your eyes cast down, and your heart raised to God.

What must you think of when the Priest shows you the Sacred Host?

Worship Christ, and say with the Centurion: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof. Speak but the word and my soul shall be healed.

What must you think of while the Sacred Host rests upon your tongue?

Lord, make my tongue holy, and grant that henceforth I may never use it but to love and thank Thee.

May you pray with the lips then?—No: only in my heart.

What must you do having communicated?—Rise reverently, and with joined hands, and eyes cast down, return to a quiet place.

What must you there do?—Worship Christ in my heart, thank Him for His benefit to me, offer my whole self up to Him, and ask for grace to serve Him faithfully to the end of my life.

How must you spend the day of Holy Communion?—Be religiously present in the Church Services, perform some especial good work, and watch vigilantly against all dissipation as well in words as in works.

These children are called punctually to Holy Communion once a month, by public admonition for two years, the previous confession giving sufficient opportunity for their confessor to refuse any one of them, should any reason exist to render this expedient. The habit of regularly communicating is thus formed, and it would be a rare thing to find any one *not* a communicant in our parishes. Most are regular communicants, some as often as once a week, and daily communion would not be denied if deemed essential. Every one *must* communicate at Easter. And there are very few indeed, who do not communicate at all the great festivals. The Holy Communion may be given at any time in any day, but the obliga-

tion to receive fasting, obliges most persons to communicate as early as it can be conveniently given. Many Priests are in their Churches every morning two hours or more before Mass, ready to administer the Blessed Sacrament if required, and those who are not there, may be obtained by only ringing at their bell, and giving notice one is going into the Church.

I ought to have observed before, that our little party not being composed of very intelligent children this year, our Pastor thought it his duty to give them the advantage of another month's teaching, and our day of First Communion is only to take place as I have told you, a fortnight after Easter.

The father of the Clerk, who has been village school-master, is appointed to give them daily two hours' instruction, and a girl who celebrated her First Communion three years since with great credit, is commissioned to assemble these children every afternoon in the Church porch when school is over, to hear over their appointed lessons till they can repeat them perfectly; the compact being, that as soon as each can say its lesson without missing a word, he or she may go and play. So they have enough of Catechism to make one pity them. But they all look very happy under Mitchie Lams's discipline, though sitting on the cold stones, with their hands in their tiny apron pockets, and holding one foot upon the other to keep a little warmth in their poor little bodies. "Why do you not have a fire-potchie?" (Vier potchie), I asked them this afternoon. "I do not know," was the reply; they did not seem to have thought of comforting themselves, though they might have easily done so with their little earthen pot of fire, so generally carried about by the poor in winter.

HOW TO MAKE CLEANLINESS AVAILABLE FOR GOOD.

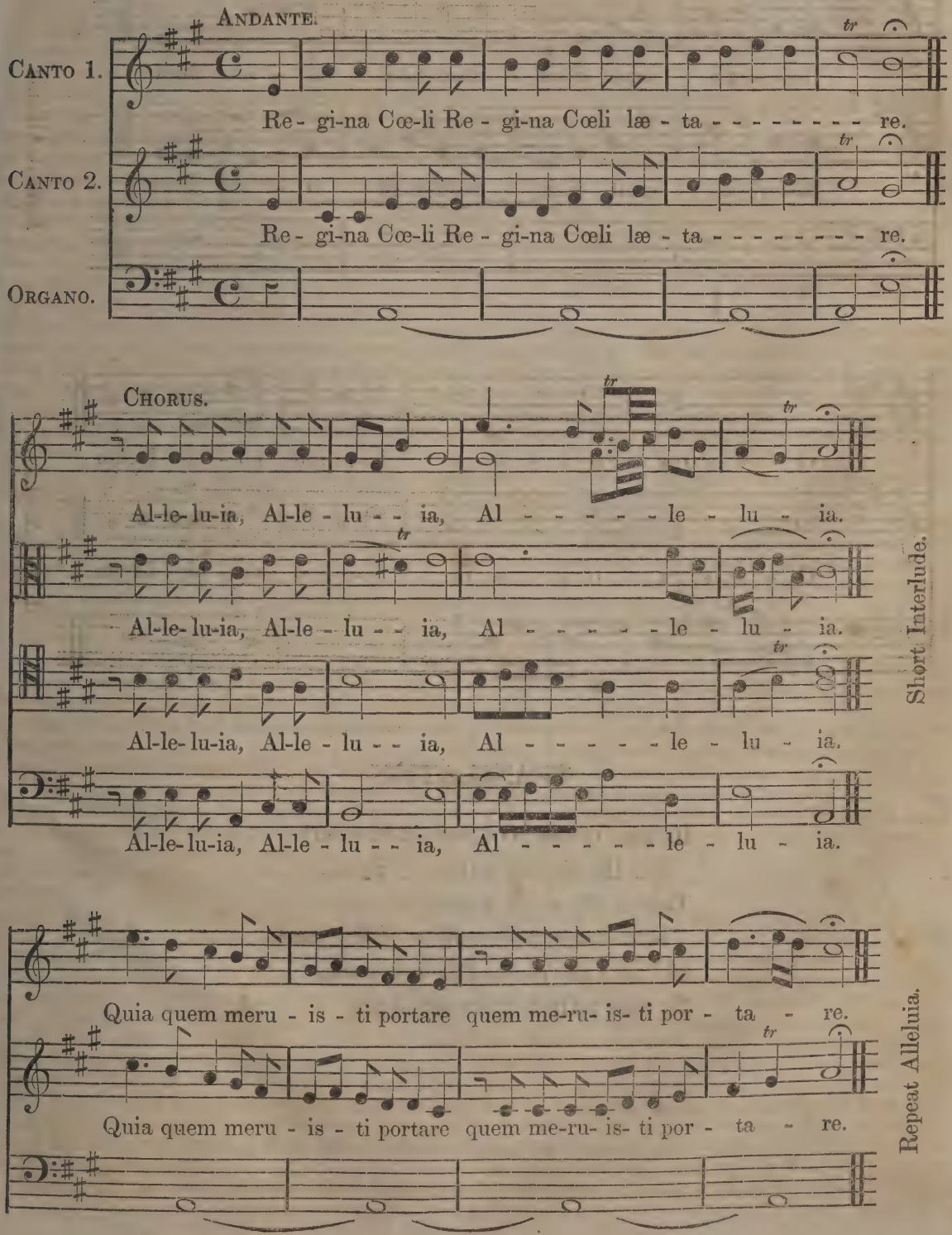
Tact and intelligence, in addition to an untiring spirit of philanthropy, must be employed to make the means of cleanliness about to be offered to the poor available for good, to an extent in any degree commensurate with the expectations of those who have taken so warm an interest in furnishing them. It is not enough that the means be there. We must also have, in those for whose use they are intended, a disposition to use them. One of the most constant results of a life of poverty in a large city is an indifference to personal cleanliness. Such an indifference is, we believe, at this moment, almost universal among the poor and labouring classes of London. It would, indeed, be surprising if it were otherwise. In the first place, cleanliness is scarcely compatible with the miserable domestic arrangements, and the privation of light, air, and water, to which the poor of a city are always more or less closely habituated. Their occupations, also, which, with the industrious, fill up nearly the whole of their waking hours, generally oppose a barrier to the cultivation of a taste for cleanliness. If it could be supposed that there is in man, as there seems to be in some of the lower animals, a natural tendency to be clean, we might perhaps depend upon its displaying itself whenever the obstacles to its indulgence might be removed. But experience and observation show that this is not so. Where *food and warmth* are scarce, there is, on the contrary, a strong tendency to shun cleanliness as a positive infliction. There is an old Scottish proverb—"the clartier the cosier"—which recent researches in animal physiology have stamped with the authority of a scientific truth. It is found that men who are insufficiently *fed and clothed* are literally not fitted to bear cleanliness. It augments the rapidity of the process by which the vitality of the body is in a constant course of reduction, and renders an increased supply of food and warmth essential to its preservation in a state of tolerable comfort. These, we apprehend, are causes which will greatly reduce the numbers of those who are expected to take advantage of the establishment of the proposed baths and washhouses for the improvement of their personal habits.—*Globe.*

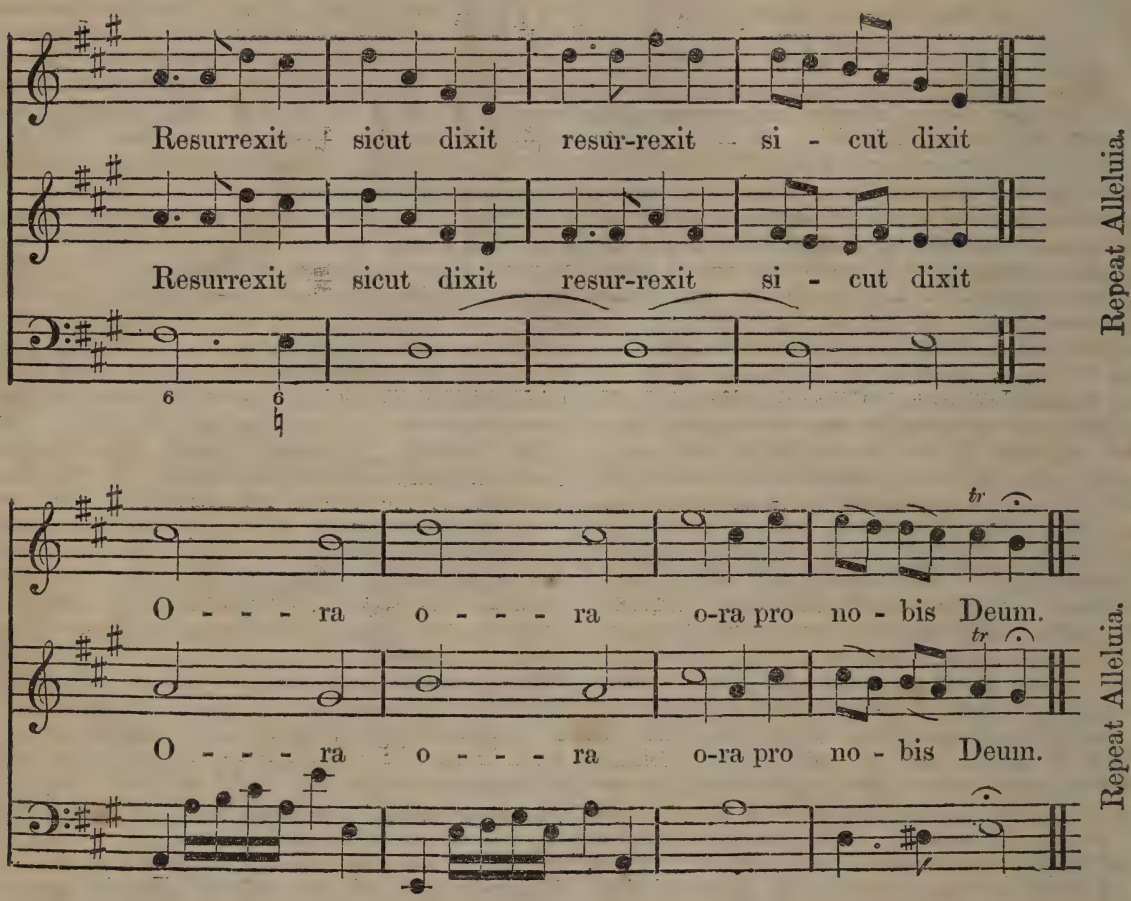
Our greatest evil is, that we wish to serve God after our own fashion, and not after his: according to our own will, and not according to his. When he wishes that we should be afflicted with illness, we wish to be well; when he wishes that we should serve him in sufferings, we desire to serve him with active works; when he is anxious for us to exercise the virtue of charity, we wish to exercise that of humility; when he desires resignation from us, we seek for a sensible devotion, for fervour in prayer, or for any other virtue; and this not because the things which we desire are more grateful to him, but because they are more suitable to our own inclinations. This is certainly the greatest hindrance which we can set in the way of our arriving at perfection; it being a thing not to be doubted, that if we wish to be saints according to our own will, we shall never become so: in order to become a saint indeed, it is necessary to do all in conformity with the will of God.—S. Francis of Sales.

St. Mary of Pazzi wrote the following resolution: "I offer myself to God, and I desire all and only that perfection which he wills me to have, and in the manner and at the time which he shall choose, and not otherwise." And on one occasion, conversing with a confidential friend, she said, "The good which comes to me by any other way than the divine will, does not appear to me to be good, and I would even choose to have no other gift, except that I might always abandon my own will and my own desires to God, rather than receive any gift according to my own will or desire. Yes, yes, 'in me sint, Deus, vota tua et non vota mea.'" And this was the grace which she demanded with the greatest fervour and frequency of our Lord, that he would make her always even to death obedient and entirely subject to his divine will and pleasure. And following this course, there is no cause for wonder that she became such a saint.

Remember, that perfection is not acquired by holding one's hands crossed before one: but it is necessary to labour in good earnest to overcome oneself, and to bring oneself to live not according to one's inclinations and passions, but according to reason, and according to rule and obedience. It is a hard matter so to do, there is no denying it, but it is necessary: nevertheless with constant practice it becomes both easy and full of sweetness.—S. Francis of Sales.

AT EASTER.


Andante.
Canto 1.
Re - gi-na Cœ-li Re - gi-na Cœli læ - ta - - - - - - - - re.
Canto 2.
Re - gi-na Cœ-li Re - gi-na Cœli læ - ta - - - - - - - - re.
Organo.
Chorus.
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le - lu - - ia, Al - - - - - - le - lu - ia.
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le - lu - - ia, Al - - - - - - le - lu - ia.
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le - lu - - ia, Al - - - - - - le - lu - ia.
Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le - lu - - ia, Al - - - - - - le - lu - ia.
Short Interlude.
Quia quem meru - is - ti portare quem me-ru- is- ti por - ta - re.
Quia quem meru - is - ti portare quem me-ru- is- ti por - ta - re.
Repeat Alleluia.


Resurrexit sicut dixit resur-rexit si - cut dixit
Resurrexit sicut dixit resur-rexit si - cut dixit
Repeat Alleluia.
O - - - ra o - - - ra o-ra pro no - bis Deum.
O - - - ra o - - - ra o-ra pro no - bis Deum.
Repeat Alleluia.

TRANSLATION.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Queen of Heaven!
For He who lay within thy womb,
True to His word of promise given,
Hath burst the cerements of His tomb.
Oh! may thy prayer His mercy win,
To raise us from our tomb of sin. A.

ST. MARY'S PRIORY.

A TALE FOR THE TIMES

CHAPTER I.

But thou hast made it sure
By Thy dear promise to Thy Church a Bride;
That Thou, on earth, wouldst aye with her endure,
Till earth to heaven be purified.

The Christian Year.

ONE Sunday evening, just as winter had set in, four ladies, members of the church established by law in England, rose from the dinner table, whilst the dessert was being set on by an old man out of livery, and drew their chairs round a blazing fire. These ladies were Mrs. Walton of Everlegh Hall, her only daughter, Agatha Walton, a girl of eighteen, her niece, Miss Trevor, a single lady of more than thirty, and Miss Harding, a visitor. This last-mentioned young lady was about three-and-twenty, the daughter of an officer, who had for the last two years held a command in a garrison town, and before that had moved about with his family from one set of quarters to another. Her mother had been an early friend of Mrs. Walton's, but they had very seldom met since both had been married. Mrs. Walton had been a widow five years. Her husband left the property heavily encumbered, and at his death she reduced the establishment, and lived quietly at Everlegh, nursing the estate for her eldest son, who was a boy at Eton. Mrs. Walton was now spending the winter at Workingham, a large manufacturing town, within ten miles of Everlegh. Her daughter had had a serious illness two years before, which interrupted her education, and she was passing the winter at Workingham for the sake of masters. Miss Trevor was one of the numerous daughters of Mr. Trevor of Elwyn Court, a much larger place than Everlegh Hall. The first Mrs. Trevor, was Mrs. Walton's sister. She had no son, and died when her daughters were little children.

Mr. Trevor married again in a few years, and his first family was thrown into the back-ground by the second. Mary Trevor was the second daughter. She was plain and destitute of accomplishment, but her exceeding amiability and goodness supplied the place of briliance, and made her loved by all who knew her well. Her cousin Agatha was a very pretty, gentle-looking girl, but with an expression of anxiety on her brow, which might be the consequence of her long illness.

Ethel Harding was not handsome, but she was graceful, and there was an expression in her face when she spoke that made her interesting. She begun the conversation as they took their seats. "It is very dangerous work, this getting round the fire," she said, "the end of it will be that no one will like to get up and go out in the cold again."—"Oh don't talk about going out," said Mrs. Walton with a shudder, "I really think I never felt any thing like this sudden frost. It is cold enough for January, and we are a month from Christmas."—"Three weeks, dear mamma," said Agatha. "It is the second Sunday in Advent you know."—"It is my dear," the mother replied; "I always forget. These high church-notions were not in fashion in my day." A very sad expression came over Agatha's sweet countenance, and she leant back in a large arm-chair her mother had made her take to shield her from draughts, and kept her eyes fixed on the fire in silence for some time. "Well," said Miss Harding, "I never mind weather myself, you know, but I don't wish any other person to go out in the cold. Of course Agatha can't go; Mrs. Walton is shivering, Miss Trevor has been coughing all day, so there is no one but myself to go."—"Oh! indeed, my dear, I don't like your going out by yourself on such a dark evening," said Mrs. Walton, "it would not be proper."—"My dear Mrs. Walton," the young lady answered, laying her hand on Mrs. Walton's arm, "it will be very proper for me, though I grant it would be highly improper for Agatha or Miss Trevor."—"How so?" asked Mrs. Walton. "Because I am older, and used to it." Miss Trevor laughed. "I should be a lucky person if I could see your age over again, Miss Harding," she said. "Well, though you may be older in actual years, you are younger in every thing else," said Miss Harding, "and you have not been brought up in the independent way I have. A soldier's daughter, born in barracks, and used to taking care of herself, is a very different sort of person from Miss Trevor of Elwyn Court."—"Well, my dear, if you are determined to go, you had better take Bailey."—"I shall do no such thing," replied Miss Harding; "consider his tendency to rheumatism, poor old man!"—"Can't she take James, mamma?" asked Agatha. "Oh! I forgot to tell you, James went home this morning. What a pity, you might have been glad to send a message to his mother and the rest."—"Oh! I meant to send a pair of warm stockings to widow Brown and Kitty Hendy by the market cart. It is coming in this week, is it not?"—"Not till Saturday, dear, but that will be time enough. Now, Ethel, you shall take one of the maids to walk down with you."—"I shall take no such thing," replied Miss Harding, "I shall go alone, that's decided," she added, rising and taking a piece of cake from the table. "And as there is no cold pudding to be had, please to take this piece of plum-cake by way of a settler." Mrs. Walton laughed as she took the offered slice of cake, and said, "Oh, you are a droll girl, Ethel! do you get your own way in this sort of fashion at home?"—"Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't," Miss Harding replied. "But you know I have not been much at home for some years past."—"Ah! I can't think how you can bear that plan," said Agatha; "you are hardly ever all at home together. As for you, Ethel, I don't think you have been at home many months in the last three years, and Emma, you know, I have never seen, and Adelaide only for a few days."—"Why we are a very large family," Miss Harding answered, "and we are not troubled with more money than we want, so we are forced to put up with scanty accommodation

in the way of lodging. Now don't you see, that when some are away, it makes more room for the rest."—"Well, I am very glad *you* like the plan," said Agatha, taking her friend's hand, "for if you did not, we should not have had you here now, after your spending the spring at Laneham, and the summer and autumn at Wilbury."—"How different your case is, Mary," Mrs. Walton said, turning to her niece, "they made quite a favour of your spending this one month with us, because you went to Cheltenham in the spring!"—"And three years ago," Agatha added, "when I was at Elwyn, don't you remember how Lady Louisa Danvers begged for you to go to Brighton with her, and your mamma would not hear of it; and every one said you wanted change of air then. I recollect Anne Trevor's saying—"—"I beg your pardon, dear Agatha," said Miss Trevor, blushing deeply, "but will you tell me what o'clock it is by you, I left my watch up stairs." "It is ten minutes to six, so now, Ethel, you must stay at home; you could not get down to St. George's in time."—"Indeed I can," said Miss Harding, darting out of the room. "Sit down, my dear Mary," said Mrs. Walton to her niece, "I implore you not to follow the example of that eccentric girl. She really is very hardy and used to go out in all weathers, but you, with that cough; really it would be madness to venture!"

Now Miss Trevor was a good walker, and not accustomed to be taken care of at home. She was the main stay of the village school, and neither rain nor snow ever kept her from it. And in the short days of winter, many a time after the light was gone, had Mary Trevor hastened home to dress for a dinner party through muddy lanes with a basket or jug in her hand after visiting the poor; so that it was a mere trifle to her to walk rapidly through two broad well-lighted streets on a clear frosty night. However, as she saw it would distress her aunt if she went, she immediately yielded. Mary Trevor had been so long used to giving way to others, that it hardly cost her an effort. Agatha proposed to read the evening service, and a sermon, and to have the servants in to join, and Mrs. Walton, smothering a yawn, consented. And here we will leave them to follow Miss Harding. At Workingham there is a large Catholic population, and a great church has been erected there, in which the services are performed with a degree of magnificence, till of late unknown in England since the (so-called) Reformation. Miss Harding had a strong desire to attend service in this church. It was no idle curiosity, or love of music and poetry, which made her long to enter St. Peter's. Ethel Harding had been for many months fully convinced of the truth of every doctrine which the Catholic Church teaches, and was only held back from abjuring Protestantism, by a line of argument which was any thing but satisfactory to her own mind. Ethel's conversion had taken place without her ever having held the slightest conversation with any ecclesiastic of the true church. As a girl, she had been indifferent, nay, averse to piety. Her father was a worldly man of a sceptical turn of mind; her mother a well-meaning woman, but without any settled views in religion. Ethel had a natural taste for reading, which she was suffered to indulge without any restraint or guidance; as might be expected she grew up proud and self-willed to a frightful degree. At the age of nineteen a train of circumstances, prepared by Divine Providence, worked a total change in her heart, and she became as zealous in the service of her Maker, as she had hitherto been lukewarm. At this period she went to stay with a relation of her mother's, Mrs. Raymond of Wilbury Court, Devon, a lady we shall bring upon the scene as one of our most important characters. The vicar of Wilbury had taken up those views which have been taught by some of the most eminent men at Oxford, and Mrs. Raymond had followed him. Ethel had imbibed these opinions from them, and was now inclined to go farther than her teachers. When Ethel was a child, the regiment Colonel Harding was then attached to was quartered in a town near Wilbury Court, and the Hardings paid several visits to the Raymonds. Since that time the intercourse between the two families had been kept up by the young people going down to stay at Wilbury, one at a time; sometimes Colonel Harding or his eldest son had taken one of the daughters down, and remained there during their leave, but Mrs. Harding had not seen her cousin for many years. Colonel Harding had five daughters, of whom Ethel was the third. Mrs. Raymond had no children and delicate health. She had liked Ethel as a child in spite of her serious defects of character, and had often invited her to pay her a visit. But Ethel used to tell her mother that she must invent some excuse for her, and send one of her sisters instead, as she positively would not go to Wilbury. The reason was, that Mrs. Raymond had mortified Ethel's pride by telling her of her faults, and had disgusted her by trying to keep her in more order than a spoilt conceited girl of fourteen could endure. Besides, Mrs. Raymond had the reputation of being of a serious turn of mind, and Ethel disliked pious people. But when the grace of Almighty God changed her heart, she wrote to her cousin, who replied by a warm invitation to pay her a long visit, and the result was, a friendship between them which had grown stronger every succeeding year.

(To be continued.)

Let a lie suddenly assail you, and all are in a blaze to back it; but if truth at length break through the dark veil, these same persons are as cold as ice in helping you to set yourself right.

A religion of modern origin cannot last for ever. It owes its birth to the caprices of men; we shall see it perish as we have seen it creep into being.

It is the spirit of the age that directs and colours all the events of the world.

If any thing would justify a man, who believes in an inevitable fatality, it would be that long chain of misfortunes which beset the house of Stuart for more than three hundred years.

ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY
3 8151 001 26636 7